**Year 9 – Reality TV (Includes NAPLAN Prep)**

**Content**

Students will learn about speaking and writing persuasively, whilst exploring the social and moral implications of reality Television. Students will develop their oral persuasive skills by engaging in whole class debate about the ethical suitability of reality TV and revise and expand their understanding of the techniques writers use to appeal to audiences and position them to agree with their point of view by reading a range of opinions about reality TV and then employing these in their own persuasive written pieces expressing their point of view on Reality TV. (During this time students will also be given a brief overview of the NAPLAN test and have the opportunity to practise the skills required using the example tests provided by VCAA) They will explore the forms of reality TV and the forces that shape the choices made in creating reality TV – looking at how the market, the need to appeal to the audience shape this genre.

**Key Terms:** Persuasive Language, Point of View, Positioning of audience, humour. IN relation to writing persuasively key terms: appealing to key values, using humour, using emotive language, using humour, using analogies, using logic and reason.

Film terms – such as camera shot types, angles, music etc

**Aims and Objectives**

**Knowledge – Students will know**

**Skills – Students will be able**

**Understanding – Students will understand that**

**Resources:** <http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/reality-tv.htm> - detailed guide to how reality TV is created.

<http://www.realityravings.com/2013/03/20/the-biggest-loser-look-it-aint-perfect-tv-but-does-it-deserve-to-be-equated-with-dwarf-throwing/>

(A blog about reality TV – check it first before showing to class but a fund of information)

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| Learning Activity | Student Product | Formative  Summative |
| Use page 76 English for the Australian Curriculum  Students list shows they know and then say why they appeal to people. Use strategy in book – Work in groups of four fillin gin chart two columns name of reality show and possible reasons for its popularity. Put names on top of sheet. Then after 5 - 10 mins pass to the left to another group of four they tick the 3 they believe are most popular on the list and start a new one using the same columns. Next rotation each group has two lists to tick three on (some shows will obviously get ticked many times). Then carry on the process – do 2 – 4 rotations depending on group. Groups get back their lists and count ticks – as a class work out the six most popular reality shows – what makes them popular? Why? In silence write solo for at least five minutes to a prompt such as ‘Reality TV appeals to the worst in human nature’  Students read articles about reality TV - pro and anti  Debate about reality TV – Reality TV should be banned  I recommend di  what are the most persuasive people doing – analyse  Analyse the original written pieces  Write own persuasive piece  As class consider three types of reality TV Show:  Fly on the wall' reality TV shows  2. TV-generated reality TV shows  3. Shows that blend the two  Students in small groups must review a reality TV show – divide up different ones amongst the class |  |  |
| Explain that students will be writing an opinion piece on reality TV choosing their form – review/ blog/letter/speech. The key thing is that it must demonstrate excellent use of persuasive techniques. Divide class into half. One side debates in favour of Reality TV should be banned and other side debates against the motion. The debate will be done as seen by the lovely ladies from Huntingtower – So the sides sit opposite each other. One person from each side speaks in turn and YOU CANNOT SPEAK AGAIN UNTIL EVERYONE FROM YOUR SIDE HAS SPOKEN. When you speak you can raise new point or do a rebuttal. Use a point system. 1 point for a new point 2 points for a good rebuttal. I suggest once everyone in the team has spoken then only four more contributors from each side. It’s OK for someone to stand up and say ‘I’ve got four new points and five rebuttals’ but they have to be precise. Students should all be keeping notes – to help with debate but also to help with writing their piece.  I suggest that before you run the debate the students look at the articles attached – both pro and anti reality TV to help with gathering ideas.  After the debate – discuss who was persuasive and why. Then look again at some of the articles and un pack the strategies used to position the reader to agree with their argument. Strategies such as humour, vivid language, analogies, appealing to certain emotions and values, using logic and expert opinion can be noted as a lead in to students’ writing  Students then write their own persuasive piece on the topic – I suggest 300 – 500 words. They must have a very precise purpose, audience and form e.g. a blog aimed at teens, a review in The Sunday Age aimed at an adult audience etc  Students must also complete a commentary on their written piece explaining their contention and what strategies they used to get the reader to agree with their point of view. (Strategies might include images with included). It is crucial that this commentary does not list or define techniques, instead students should explain in their own words the PRECISE intended effect on their readers of PARTICULAR words, phrases and images where relevant that they have used. This is a major assessment piece and a crucial preparation for NAPLAN test. |  |  |
| Students should now access VCAA NAPLAN website to see sample booklets and question papers – if time students can do these practise pieces and possibly use other materials on [www.wantirnaenglish.wikispaces.com](http://www.wantirnaenglish.wikispaces.com) to prepare for NAPLAN tests. |  |  |
| Students can then present reviews of chosen reality TV shows. Follow page 77 of English for the Australian Curriculum 2. They will need to work in small groups or pairs on an allocated Reality TV show. They should show the opening sequence of the show and provide a brief snapshot of the show and then provide an analysis that has been crafted using the following prompts:  Title of reality Show  Characters and a brief character outline  Use of image and sound/music/silence to create effects on the viewer  The ways in which the show introduces or reveals characters (e.g. characters talking directly to the camera or background footage)  The structure of the show (how it opens, what mini-narratives are shown, at what point the show cuts to advertsements, how the episode winds up, any teaser of what lies ahead)  The human predicaments revealed and explored  The range of emotions felt at specific moments in the show  Include amongst your reality shows – ABCs Making Australia Happy and Making Australians Happy.  Students must present this review to the class – you can assess this formally or not |  |  |
| After these presentations move into a wider discussion of the audiences and advertisers that shape reality TV – bring in the differences between ABC reality shows and the commercial channels. (ABC still needs to sell itself, but in a different way without ads??).  Students should now create a proposal for their own reality show – they may present their proposals orally or as a written dossier. Their proposals should demonstrate awareness of the form and also of the commercial pressures that shape Reality TV. See worksheet attached. This can also be a formal oral if teachers wish. |  |  |
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But weight, there's more

March 23, 2013 – the Sunday Age

**Ben Pobjie**

Isn't it great that *The Biggest Loser* is back? Such a marvellous, heart-warming show, isn't it? Inspirational. Seeing people fulfil their dreams, of not being disgusting freaks who don't deserve to be a part of normal society. It's beautiful seeing these creatures, who have forfeited their right to be considered human beings, being brought back to the bounds of decency by the gentle mercies of Michelle ''run you fat pig'' Bridges, Shannan ''more sit-ups, Lardy!'' Ponton and The ''I'm so tough my face can't move'' Commando.

I'm not saying *The Biggest Loser* is a negative influence; I'm just saying that letting your kids watch it should bring you to the notice of the authorities.

It's not often I worry about ''messages'' in TV - as far as I'm concerned the message of *Family Guy* is ''Funny!'' and the message of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was ''Sexy Fights!'' - but *TBL* claims to be transmitting a message it's not.

The message the show purports to be sending is: ''Anything is possible: if you work hard and believe in yourself, you can turn your life around''. However, the message the show is actually sending is: ''Ew! Look at these horrible fatties! Aren't they gross! Look at them try to run! Look at their big, wobbly bellies and stupid, red, sweaty faces! See their pain! Hahahahahahaha!''

*The Biggest Loser* is, to its credit, a show that knows what it does and does it well. It's just that what it does is incredibly loathsome. The average episode is divided into four segments: the Working Out While Obnoxious Skinny People Yell; the Being Given a Pointless Task by Hayley Lewis; the Tinkly Piano Music While We Talk about Your Childhood; and the Ridiculously Elongated Weigh-In. At the beginning of the series we are also introduced to the contestants by going to their houses and seeing them serve up absurd, elephantine portions of food, inflatable pools full of mashed potato and whole cows stuffed with Coco Pops, because the producer told them to.

But we quickly shift into the normal routine.

Except for The Twist! Last season's twist was that all the fatties were losers who didn't deserve loving relationships. This season's is that they are fat parents and the fat children whose lives they've ruined. So we can expect a whole lot of emotional chats with the children, making it clear they have to stop blaming their parents for their blubberiness, and also with the parents, making it clear that it's their fault their child is a repellent, socially unacceptable specimen of megafauna. And, of course, a lot of emotional chats with everyone about how if they don't get back on that treadmill and let Michelle bark like a coked-up seal in their ear for another hour, they are going to die next week.

And there you have it - *The Biggest Loser*, the show for everyone who believes being overweight makes a person worthless, and that anyone who refuses to lose weight deserves loneliness, derision and an early death. And that anyone can get into shape, as long as they have a personal trainer working on them full-time and cameras on them 24/7 to prevent them ever straying from their prescribed diet. But I'm sure most people can manage that.

Oh, isn't it great to have it back? Don't forget to point and laugh!

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/but-weight-theres-more-20130322-2gk6e.html#ixzz2ORiuO87S>

http://www.wired.com/opinion/2012/10/why-reality-tv-doesnt-suck-and-may-even-make-us-smarter/

Why Reality TV Doesn’t Suck, and May Even Make Us Smarter

* BY [GRANT MCCRACKEN](http://www.wired.com/opinion/author/grantmccracken/)10.04.126:30 AM

It’s easy to assume reality TV is the place where bad TV went to hide when the rest of TV got a lot [better](http://nymag.com/arts/all/aughts/62513/). Like that old Wild West town where criminals congregate, reality TV is often perceived as the last, “[vast wasteland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wasteland_Speech)”: uncouth, desperate, lawless.

But while some shows seem irredeemably bad (*Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*, anyone?), others offer an indication of good things to come. In fact, by turning all of us into *virtual anthropologists*, reality TV may lead to the improvement – dare I say it – of Western civilization. Reality TV may even be the next stage in the evolution of television.

*Grant McCracken*

Grant McCracken is an anthropologist who has studied American culture and business for over two decades. His books include *Chief Culture Officer* and *Culturematic*.

In its early days, TV was confronted with a series of problems. It was a new medium struggling to find a place in the world. It had quality-control problems in sound and image. And it was talking to millions of American for whom English was a second language and American culture was still a mystery. TV solved these problems by relying on genre. Once you understood you were watching a “cop show” or a “Western,” the rest was easy.

Genre was like a cheat sheet. It flattened every difficulty: technical, intellectual, cultural, linguistic.

Successive generations got better at TV, and when this happened genre TV became grueling. It bored us. These programs “jumped the shark” and we fled. Now, show runners were free and even forced to build in [complexity](http://adage.com/article/media/television-cbs-tweaks-venerable-crime-genre-pays/147203/). But then even this complexity began to bore us.

Writers were free of genre but they were still *forming* the narrative. They were still making a story when what we wanted was the uncontrolled, spontaneous, accident-prone, and most of all, the *unpredictable*. Because, by this time, it took a matter of seconds to divine what was going on and get there first. We needed to know that not even the producer knew where this baby was headed.

**Reality TV is where TV has always been evolving. It just took us a century or so to get there.**

Reality TV is not straight out of genre. Even when manipulated by producers, no one quite knows where things will end up. And this makes it interesting and sometimes even, as James Poniewozik has pointed out, [uncomfortable](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,421047-2,00.html). And that keeps us watching. Reality TV is where TV has always been evolving. It just took us a century or so to get there.

**The anthropological question: What else is going on here?**

Culture is a thing of surfaces and secrets. The anthropologist is obliged to record the first and penetrate the second.

Once we’ve figured out what people believe to be true about themselves, we can begin to figure out what’s really going on in this culture. In this case, the surface says, “reality TV is a dumbing down.” But the secret says “not always.” Sometimes, reality TV contributes to a smartening up.

Case in point: My wife and I watch *Project Runway*. She’s a graphic designer, so she has a clue about how decisions are being made by students and critics. Meanwhile, I get to test my grasp of this new world by predicting the picks and the pans. But right or wrong, I learn something. And I think I’m getting better (though my wife might demur). Incidentally, trial and error is the way anthropologists build up knowledge of other cultures, venturing opinions the world approves or scorns.

Reality TV makes anthropologists of us all.

**Over many episodes and seasons, the truth will out.**

To be sure, there are some people so emotionally stunted or disappointed by life they treasure the humiliations inflicted by reality TV, but the rest of us are learning. Consider the show *Shark Tank*, which drew its largest audience ever and premiered recently at the top of its slot. Scores of websites analyze and dissect the sharks’ every move, educating budding entrepreneurs everywhere – outside rarefied tech clusters – about the difference between a product and a plan, the difference between an idea and implementation. That’s when anthropology doesn’t just tell us, but shows us how to act and think and grow. Reality TV forces revelation.

A key feature of anthropology is the long, observational, “ethnographic” interview. Anthropologists believe one of the advantages of this method is that no one can manage appearances, let alone lie, successfully for a long period of time.

So while the Kardashian sisters may wish to create an impression – and the producers edit to reinforce that impression – over many episodes and seasons, the truth will out. Whether they like it or not, eventually we will see into Kardashian souls. That these souls are never as beautiful as the sisters themselves is, well, one of the truths that reality TV makes available to us, and here it performs one of the functions normally dispatched by religious or moral leaders.

Some reality TV remains, of course, appalling. Reality TV has a weakness for beautiful people who are too stupid to appreciate that their limitations are better kept from public view. But the rest of us are, I think, well served. And getting smarter because of it.

<http://www.realityravings.com/2013/03/20/the-biggest-loser-look-it-aint-perfect-tv-but-does-it-deserve-to-be-equated-with-dwarf-throwing/> = in favour – rather long blog – but some parts might be useful – pairs up well with Ben Pobje piece.

http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/lifes-too-short-for-reality-tv-20110707-1h4or.html

[The Sydney Morning Herald](http://www.smh.com.au/)

[National Times](http://www.smh.com.au/opinion)

Life's too short for reality TV

Date

July 8, 2011

Category

**Opinion**

* Comments **122**
* Read later

Master life or *MasterChef*. You can only choose one.

I despise *MasterChef*. Phew, it's good to say that publicly. I hate it not because it is bad television - that's a matter of taste - but because each week more than 1.5 million Australians watch people they don't really care about working their patooties off trying to make their dreams come true. The result? Another 10 hours wasted (multiplied by 1.5 million) that these viewers could have spent working their own patooties off chasing their own aspirations.

So I hate *MasterChef*, *The Block*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *Biggest Loser* - all of them. Reality shows allow us to feel a bland, artificial version of that incredible thrill you get from having a crack and chasing your ambitions, but without having to risk anything. That's unreality TV.

I have nothing against the contestants in there busting their pork buns every week. That's their dream. But if you find your every conversation is about the latest elimination challenge, you are wasting the main raw ingredient of life - time - and making sure your future is a fast food version of the gourmet degustation you could plate up for yourself and your family.

Imagine how you could change your reality if you gave up reality TV. Picture what could happen if you took the time spent watching *The Block* and spent it renovating your own house, with your children. What a difference it would make to their lives if you bonded with them by spending those hours creating a house you all love.

Then add up the time you and your partner have spent watching spray-tanned couples pretend to ''have a real connection'' on 11 seasons of *Dancing with the Stars*, and imagine spending those hours working on the actual relationship with your spouse.

And consider how different life could be if you spent the 5-15 hours a week you waste on the artificial emotions served up on *Masterchef* trying to achieve your version of Julie Goodwin's life-changing win.

Please stop tuning in to hear how ''this time the contestants have pushed themselves to the limits and pulled out all the stops'', and start listening to that persistent voice you hear as you fall asleep every night saying, ''Hey, maybe I could write that book, start that business, help those people …''

A friend in Britain has written what he calls his *MasterChef* novel. Whenever his girlfriend sat down to watch it, he would work. Two years later the girlfriend is gone, but the novel is finished and he is looking for an agent.

Have a look at the people you admire, the real ''get things done'' types who go out there and inspire us. Ask them how they spend their time. Follow their Facebook page or Twitter feed for a while, if they even have one.

I bet you won't see Darren Lockyer tweeting about how he ''Just can't believe Hayden put ginger AND lemongrass in that soup. LOL!!!" He's a bit busy getting stuff done. And I bet you won't find Ronni Kahn of Oz Harvest facebooking "Purple?!?!? For a bathroom? OMFG!!!" She's a bit busy getting food to people who can't afford it.

For my three most recent books, on motherhood, cancer and nursing, I interviewed more than 300 people about the nuts and bolts of what our incredibly short time on this planet is really about - life, death, family and love. If there is one thing I can guarantee, it's that there will never be a person who lies on their deathbed, shaking with rage, sobbing, "Dear God, I wish I'd spent more time watching *MasterChef*."

Marty Wilson is a speaker, stand-up comic and the author of the *What I Wish I Knew …* series.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/lifes-too-short-for-reality-tv-20110707-1h4or.html#ixzz2OQ9jWONW>

Channel Ten is trying to find a new reality TV show to replace the empty slot that will be left by *The Biggest Loser*.

There are lots of reality TV shows covering topics such as:

* buying houses
* decorating houses
* becoming a model
* dancing
* singing
* hospital wards
* weight loss
* choosing clothes
* etc!

**Task**

Your task is to devise a workable reality TV show idea. It should be exciting and original!

You should decide whether it will be a show that follows contestants on a journey (e.g. losing weight, makeovers, buying a house) or whether it will be a competition that will allow audiences to vote (e.g. *The X Factor*).

Get into groups of three or four and complete the tasks below. You will present this information to the TV bosses at Channel Ten.

* Create a name for your TV show.
* Storyboard the main series of events that will take place in a single episode of your TV show.
* Draw a diagram of how you imagine the set to look.
* Suggest a short list of the sort of people you will want to appear on your show (as presenters, judges etc.) if applicable.
* Create a detailed explanation of what will happen in the complete series of TV programmes (e.g. what will happen in the end or are each episodes telling separate stories?)
* Prepare a speech to present to the Channel Ten executive to persuade them that your idea is better than any of the other groups. (Make sure this speech includes the commercial viability of your idea)